



### Wenham Town Department Profile: Fire Department

Department Name:	Fire Department
Department Head:	Chief Robert Blanchard
General functions:	The mission of the Fire Department is to protect the lives, property, and physical well-being of our citizens to the best of our ability. We will endeavor to be prepared, equipped, and trained to respond to and mitigate any incident or potential hazard which may challenge our community.
Contact Number:	978-468-5508
Annual budget:	\$722,199

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Who are you, and what is your department?

*I joined the Wenham Fire Department in 1979. I worked my way through the ranks of the call department as a Lieutenant, Captain, Deputy Chief. I was appointed Acting Chief in November 2006, and Chief in April 2007.*

*The Wenham Fire Department currently has 27 members, three of whom are full-time. Full-time members include the Chief, the Fire Prevention Officer, and a Firefighter. Other members of the Department are "Call Firefighters"; this means that they have other jobs and respond to the Fire Department when alerted. The station is manned during business hours Monday through Saturday. There is an Officer-in-Charge who is on call 24 hours a day.*

What are some of the most common tasks you assist the public with daily?

*The Fire Department responds to all fire, medical, rescue, and automobile accident incidents. When I started in 1979, we responded to an average of 2 calls a week. Now we average about 2 calls a day. The proportion of medical responses has increased over the years; more than half of the calls are now medical issues. We have evolved over the years from a fire department that responds to medicals to a medical team that responds to fires.*

What are some of the more rewarding elements of the work your department carries out?

*There are many rewarding aspects to the work of the Fire Department. Dealing with public safety – whether at a fire scene, an accident, or a medical emergency – is gratifying. I enjoy the many connections I've made with the citizens of Wenham over the past three decades. The Department's educational programming has given me the opportunity to work with people of all ages (e.g., summer playground program, fire prevention in the schools, college programs, senior citizen initiatives).*

*It has been rewarding to observe some of the changes in firefighting during my tenure. The many changes in equipment and technology over the years, such as defibrillators, Jaws of Life tools, and thermal imaging cameras, make our jobs a little easier and much safer.*

*A particularly rewarding aspect of my role has been the longstanding tradition of fundraising for the Fire Department. The members of the Wenham Fire Company have raised significant funds to purchase much-needed equipment and defray costs to the Town. The community support for these fundraising efforts has been steadfast and incredibly rewarding!*

What are some common challenges?

*One of the ongoing challenges is attracting and retaining Call Firefighters. While the work is very rewarding, it requires a unique commitment of time and energy that impacts work and family. Training requirements have increased significantly over the years. All new provisional firefighters are required to attend the State Fire Academy training program. This program is held nights and week-ends for five months. Upon completion, the recruits are eligible to become Firefighter 1, 2 certified. All firefighters participate in mandatory in-house training for both firefighting and medical training. Firefighters who are EMTs (Emergency Medical Technicians) must also meet national requirements for continuing education.*

In what ways do you work with other town departments daily?

*The Fire Department works closely with many other Town Departments. The Police typically respond to incidents and work collaboratively with Fire personnel. In storms and weather emergencies, the Department communicates closely with the Highway Department. The Fire Department has led educational programming through the Council on Aging and the School District. At the administrative level, such as budgets, all Town Departments collaborate and work closely with Town Administrator Peter Lombardi.*

What are some achievements made by the department recently?

- *In March 2016, the Fire Department started an Internship Program. The program gave interested candidates an opportunity to respond to emergencies and train with the Call Firefighters to get a feel for what is expected of them, should they decide to join the department. Upon completion of the program, eight candidates were appointed as Call Firefighters. The Department is always looking for new recruits who are interested in joining as Call Firefighters. Candidates must be 18 years of age, have a driver's license, live within the local area, and have some flexibility with their schedule. Anyone interested can stop by the fire station for an application or obtain one from the website.*

- *The Enon One working group is currently making plans to bring the 1849 hand pump back to Town. This antique fire apparatus was moved during the Town Hall renovation project, and the goal is to bring this valuable piece of history back to a new building located in the Town Hall parking lot.*

- *The Department leads an extensive educational program of community outreach. Through a state S.A.F.E. grant, we are able to provide multiple programs to residents. Some examples of programs are: "Fire Day" at the summer park program, Fire Prevention day at Buker School, Family Night at the station during Fire Prevention Week in October, CPR Instruction at the High School, residential staff training at Gordon College, and senior programs through the Council on Aging & Enon Village.*

What are your goals for the department over the next year?

*Goals for the department over the next year are a continuation of this year's initiatives. We plan to continue the Internship Program and maintain a high quality of training for our recruits as well as veteran firefighters. Keeping up with training requirements and regulatory demands is always a high priority.*

*We are looking forward to the arrival of our new pumper truck to replace the 1989 Engine 3. We are hoping for delivery of the new truck by the end of September. The new truck will be a focus of training this year.*

*The Fire Department is currently exploring the possibility of a Town-operated ambulance service. There are ongoing discussions with the Selectmen and Finance Committee regarding the feasibility of taking this service on in-house.*

What is the best way for the public to give you feedback and to get the assistance they need from you?

*For emergencies, dial 911. The business line at the Fire Department is 978-468-5508; my email is [rblanchard@wenhamma.gov](mailto:rblanchard@wenhamma.gov).*